

12/16/19

To: Veterinarians, Idaho Falls Animal Control, and Law Enforcement Officials

From: Eastern Idaho Public Health

Subject: Animal bites / exposure protocol.

Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) has a courier service for shipping biological samples to the state laboratory in Boise. The courier service picks up samples twice a week. The samples are delivered to the state lab by the late afternoon of the following business day. The cost of the courier service is paid for by EIPH. To keep costs down and due to samples that may not arrive to the lab in a timely manner by use of our courier service, EIPH makes the following recommendations pertaining to animals to be submitted to the state laboratory for rabies testing.

As a general rule, the state lab will not test an animal for rabies unless it is known to have exposed a human or another animal.

Each possible rabies exposure scenario is unique. Please refer to Idaho's Rabies Protocol at <http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/DiseasesConditions/RabiesInformation/tabid/176/Default.aspx> to guide you through different scenarios for Rabies Prophylaxis and Animal Management.

EIPH would also like to emphasize our preferences in regards to Idaho's Rabies Protocol. They are:

- EIPH strongly encourages owners to isolate / quarantine their pets rather than sending the head for rabies testing to the state lab.
- If the owner insists on rabies testing instead of isolation / quarantine, the owner will assume all costs of shipping and handling if the sample needs to be FedEx'd and cannot be shipped using EIPH's courier service. A specimen sent by FedEx from EIPH to the state lab could cost the owner anywhere from \$75 - \$100 depending on the size of package. The owner will make payment of this fee prior to sending the specimen.
- Veterinarians are also encouraged to ship specimens from their facility and charge the owner for this service. The state lab is not open on weekends and holidays unless by special arrangement so be sure to get approval through EIPH or the state lab before sending the specimen or the specimen may not reach the lab.
- If veterinarians / animal control / law enforcement would like to use courier service provided by the EIPH, they must confirm courier service with the health district before

bringing the specimen to EIPH. Also, the specimen must be packaged according to government shipping regulations or EIPH **will not accept the package**.

- In regards to bats, wild animals, and stray cats / dogs (animals that have no owner) testing, EIPH will assume the cost of shipping and handling if the situation warrants testing.

Again, each situation is unique. EIPH will evaluate each individual situation to ensure the public is protected. EIPH thanks you for your understanding in regards to rabies testing. **Remember, if EIPH is notified early of a possible rabies exposure (the day of or next business day), then the courier service can be used at no charge to send the specimen to the state lab for rabies testing. If EIPH is not notified until the recommended 10 day period after exposure (for test results) is almost up, then fees may be charged to the owner of the animal for shipping of the specimen by FedEx.** If you have any questions please call Ken Anderson at (208) 533-3140. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenneth S. Anderson III, MSPH
Epidemiologist
Eastern Idaho Public Health